

## ROD OF JESSE

If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe how can you believe if I tell you Heavenly things? No one has ascended into Heaven but he who descended from Heaven, the Son of Man. (John 3,13.)

Clearly, then, we have in the Fourth Gospel a most unsecret Messiah. A series of revealing 'I AM' sayings has been woven into the texture of this Gospel, seven in number:

I AM (says Jesus betimes)  
the Bread of life (6,48)  
the Light of the world (8,12)  
the Door of the sheepfold (10,7)  
the Good Shepherd (10,14)  
the Resurrection and the Life (11,25)  
the Way, the Truth and the Life (14,6)  
I Am the True Vine (and you are the branches: 15,1 ff.)

Once he says in controversy with the Jews, 'Before Abraham was, I AM,' thereby associating himself with the supposed Name of God most intimately, and for saying this, the Jews take up stones against him. (John 8,58.) Twice in John they attempt to stone Jesus although we find nowhere a hint of such a fiction in the Synoptics.

There is a kind of human unreality about the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel despite the singular opinion of Professor William Benjamin Smith that he is more fully humanized here and better furnished with human sentiment compared to the demigod which Professor Smith would find in Mark, but this is a judgment that is wrong on both counts. Even JM Robertson, who claimed Smith as a colleague in the Negative argument, could not accept his opinion on that. I find (and so did Santayana find) that Mark's virile portrait is convincing despite his array of wonders, but of course we must allow that the quality of virility may be owing to the mind and art of the primitive Evangelist.

## PRESENCE

John's focus is the living Christ. He means to bring his Jesus before us without a sense that he is confined to the past, or that his very deeds are drifting ever further away. Yet there is nothing lacking in this Evangelist's sense of the past. In no sense does he cancel the history of Jesus or doubt of a singular Incarnation in a human life. He shows very plainly that this life is over and done. The work of Christ is an achieved